

Introduction

In my role as Social Responsibility Officer I spend my time equipping, enabling and encouraging social action in churches across the Diocese of Truro. There is a great deal of exciting and pragmatic work going on that is vital to our communities. Yet, much of the time we do not recognise all that is going on and we can lack a coherent identity of our social action. Of course, all churches need to be aware of and obedient to their own immediate context in shaping social action, but I believe there are two habits that can be considered across the diocese's social action and can shape both our systematic policy and practical mission. These are being *with* and being *for* those in need.

Over the course of this report I will propose that we renew our understanding of social action in the Diocese of Truro in order to be with and for those in need. First, I will remind us of the context of our Church, second, I will display the need that exists here in Cornwall, third, I will detail why we need to be for and why we need to be with those in need, combining both of these habits to show that our social action needs to be concurrently with and for those in need. I will finish with some practical suggestions of how we can do this.

There is of course a great deal more that could be covered concerning social action work across the Diocese of Truro and through the presence of work of other individuals, groups and organisations in Cornwall, but there is not room in this project to give adequate space to all of these. I hope that this will be an encouragement for ongoing work and a catalyst to further conversation, presence and action. This is for leaders at diocesan and local levels, but also for every single person in the Diocese of Truro. It is the intention that being with and for those in need makes Cornwall a more just and more aspirational place for all, one that looks more like the Kingdom of God each day.

The Context of our Church

“When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.”

Luke 14:13 ESV

We, as the Diocese of Truro, do hold the resources, the capacity and the intention to hold a feast and we need to ensure that this primarily hosts those in need. This is the instruction that Jesus sets out for his followers in Luke 14, but also what our context demands of us. There is a profound level of deprivation in Cornwall in 2024 and many difficulties in addressing this. Despite this, the beauty of Cornwall is reflected in the heart of its people. This is evident in the many fantastic organisations that are seeking social transformation and justice. The Church has to be a part of this.

The Bible consistently upholds this necessity to be with and for those in need. Not just social commands, but a culture of being with and for is set out from the very early foundations of Jewish society. “If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, *you shall support him* as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and *he shall live with you.*”¹ It is then radically reaffirmed in Jesus first recorded public words where he sets out his Spirit anointed manifesto to “proclaim good news to the poor... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”² This care that is innate in Jewish culture is expanded throughout the New Testament to the extent of John’s great social need ultimatum, “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”³ The picture that we are given is not only a command to care for those in need, but a question on our heart and the presence of the love of God in us if we are not wrenched into action and presence. A whole

¹ Leviticus 25:35-36, ESV.

² Luke 4:18-19, NIV.

³ 1 John 3:17, NIV.

life discipleship, being more like Jesus, demands us spending more time with and for those in need.

This narrative was addressed in the document concerning the Diocese of Truro's allocation of finances for the next ten years.

"Our plans and our budgets cannot just be inward looking. We know that there are more and more "hands reaching out" from and to the poor and those in need. We sometimes speak of the "rainy day," and Proverbs reminds us of the times when it snows - arguably our context today is one where we can reasonably expect "bad weather" for years rather than for a day or a season."⁴

Not only does this statement mean we will use our resources to strengthen the church in all expressions across the diocese, but that it will also be for and with those in the community that have the greatest need. Those for whom the "bad weather" will cause more damage, last longer and feel more severe. There is work to be done here for the church to act and live humbly. The Church of England holds power and we must recognise when we may need to relinquish some of this power to listen and be obedient to the needs of our community.

Of course, there is great deal of social action already being undertaken by churches across the Diocese of Truro. At a local level I daily see an abundance of individuals motivated to love their communities and doing so in practical ways. There are many projects running out of Anglican churches in Cornwall, from foodbanks, to Christians Against Poverty debt advice centres to school holiday provision. On a systematic level the assurance of £950,000 of Lowest Income Communities Funding specifically allocated to communities in need has been a genuine enabler to much of this work becoming sustainable. However, we need to

⁴ *Tending the Vineyard*, Diocese of Truro, 2023.

continually explore our theological motivation for social action, both as an encouragement to persevere and to ensure we remain faithful to the reasons behind why we seek to love our neighbour.

Most of us are acutely aware of the poverty stricken context we live in and the need for change both at a local and government level to see healing in our communities. I have found a familiar echo to these words in the Labour Party's campaign mantra and early days in government. They have consistently spoken of the situation we are in as a country and reminded the public that there is no quick, easy fix. Yet there has also been a continued narrative of enthusiasm and hope for change to come.

For the Church, our hope and enthusiasm rests in the types of scriptures referenced already and the move in our hearts to see God's Kingdom here on earth in its fullness. The *Five Marks of Mission* bring all of this into specific aspirations.

These are not to be taken independently nor hierarchically, but show a holistic picture of a range of social action, justice and community. Together, we see all aspects of what we long to see in being with and for all people in our communities, but especially those who are in need. It is vital that our social action remains rooted in these things with its

eyes fixed firmly on Jesus. Without a constant reminder of why we are with and for those in need, there is a danger that the Church can lose sight of the central life giving truth that we are all in need and Jesus Christ is the only one who can truly serve this need. There are physical and mental needs that we can temporarily serve, but we must remember that we ourselves are not the Good News of the Kingdom; rather, we are simply called to proclaim this news.

1. **To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**
2. **To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**
3. **To respond to human need by loving service**
4. **To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation**
5. **To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

There is a mandate to serve those in need in our immediate context and we are aware that need clearly exists in the community of the Diocese of Truro. Therefore, from here we need to closely examine this need and consider what shape our social action will take in the habits of being with and for those in need.

Need

“For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’”

Deuteronomy 15: 11 ESV

One of the central truths of the Gospel is that we are in fact all in need of salvation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a great equaliser, it is categorically for and with all, we are all one in Christ Jesus.⁵ If we do not recognise that we are in need that we have not truly understood this great unifying foundation. Yet there is a reality that some of us are more oppressed and in greater material, emotional and mental need. In particular the Bible lays out a frequent reminder to seek justice for the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the poor.⁶ There is necessity to pay attention to the tension that we are all in need, but there are some to whom we are commanded to open our hand wide. If we do not recognise the variety of need, we are doing a disservice to those on the margins, those who are in greatest need.

The Greek word often used in scripture, for the poor or needy, *ptochos*, conveys this sense of a person who needs to be in receipt of aid. Someone who is lacking in anything and by nature of this there was a direct correlation in the early church to communally serving the needy. With this comes the expectation that all are

The bread which you hold back belongs to the hungry; the coat, which you guard in your locked storage-chests, belongs to the naked; the footwear mouldering in your closet belongs to those without shoes. The silver that you keep hidden in a safe place belongs to the one in need.

St Basil, *Musings on Church and State*

⁵ Galatians 3:28.

⁶ Deuteronomy 10:18, Zechariah 7:10, Luke 4:18, Acts 6:1

simply stewards of wealth and nothing is individually owned, therefore resources must be directed to those that need them.

This understanding is evident in what is now described as relative poverty. For people in the UK this describes the need of people compared to their neighbours in this country.⁷ It references the financial ability of people to access the expected minimum standard of living. In 2022/23, 14.3 million people (21%) were in relative poverty after housing costs and 12 million (18%) were in absolute low income after housing costs.⁸ Of this, 22% of children were in relative poverty, Cornwall mirrors this average with 21.9% of children in relative poverty.

Although, globally there are too many examples of severe and prominent forms of need, this cannot distract from the startlingly high level of relative poverty in Cornwall. This can be manifested in many forms, from children leaving home in the morning, having not been fed since their school lunch the day before, to the endemic of oppression of debt, alcohol, drugs and isolation. Every member of clergy and employee working in lowest income communities that I interviewed in 2023, recognised prevalent issues in their community of mental ill-health, insufficient housing & homelessness, debt, physical ill health & disability and social isolation.⁹ Although anecdotal, this picture is unfortunately one that many would recognise from communities around Cornwall.

In 2014, Theos' *Good Neighbours* report studied the social presence of the church in low income communities across England, one case study being Camborne. My research draws on this study and places it in the context of current lived experience of Camborne, alongside qualitative research conducted through interviews with a representative from Camborne Cluster of Churches and a representative from Transformation CPR, an independent

⁷ Strictly, the Department for Work and Pension's definitions are: "Relative low income: This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year. Absolute low income: This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of median income in a base year, usually 2010/11. This measurement is adjusted for inflation."

⁸ DWP, Households Below Average Income, 2022/23

⁹ Appendix A: LICF Report 2023

foodbank+ in the area.¹⁰ The truth is that the church was highly involved in social need in Camborne in 2014 and continues this presence in 2024. There is great hope in the community and many of the difficulties identified in 2014 have been overcome, yet the level of deprivation has grown exponentially.

In particular in Cornwall, we see a unique combination of many factors that lead to relative poverty for many. The South West is the worst region in the UK for insecure work.¹¹ This is largely due to the predominant industries of customer service and food & drink often providing low-paid, seasonal, zero-hour contract work. There is an ever-inflating property market, especially in tourism hot-spots and costs of living that are soaring higher than can be realistically matched. This presents an unassailable void for the many people in social housing, temporary and rented accommodation.

All of these factors are accentuated by the reality of rural poverty. The lived experience of a person in relative poverty in Cornwall involves isolation, poor travel links and low industrial and educational opportunities. These all disproportionately affect someone living in a rural area, compared to those in much larger conurbations

While the income of Transformation CPR has increased by 636% from 2018 to 2023, their output has also vastly grown, distributing over 150,000 meals in 2023.

In 2023 60,000 workers in Cornwall earned less than the real living wage of £12 an hour.

Cornwall Council 2023

The average house price is 10.99 times the average income in Cornwall.

Cornwall Vital Signs 2022, p.10

The average allocation of funds per school pupil is 142 lowest out 149 regions in England, and our teachers have the lowest average wage.

Cornwall's Vital Signs 2022, p.14

¹⁰ Details of these findings are in Appendix B

¹¹ *Two Nations*, Centre for Social Justice, 2023.

found across the rest of England. The result of this urban/rural deprivation disparity, is that despite the clear presence of high deprivation in Cornwall, our systems for resource allocation favour areas of urban poverty over rural poverty.

Within the Church of England, there is frequent discussion of the need to serve the poor, but this targets urban contexts. *Faith in the City*, the Archbishop's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, Estates Evangelism Task Group and the Church Urban Fund all display this conscious partiality of urban poverty. Whilst significant poverty in cities across the UK makes such a focus understandable, this focus from the church neglects to recognise the extent of rural poverty and undertake a genuine love and service for the need in rural areas.

Over the past 40 years we have seen vast change in Cornwall, growing wealth inequality, migration into small urban areas and communities becoming more dispersed without the public services to maintain social relationships. The nature of rural poverty means that its consequences manifest themselves in second and third order effects. Insufficient and outdated housing means that the average home in Cornwall costs 20% more to heat for a winter than the average home in England.¹² An under-funded NHS combined with geographically isolated communities results in the highest percentage of unpaid carers in England.¹³ All of these factors combined, with many more, account for the growing number of those in need in Cornwall.

We, as the Church, must understand the reality of this need that has been discussed. This reality and our privilege then demands that we act for those in need, just as is demonstrated to us by God the Father. It is necessary to look into areas of need, recognise the good there is, discern how God is already moving to act and follow him and nurture this. Therefore, we will go on to consider how and why we act for those in need.

¹² *Cornwall's Vital Signs*, Cornwall Community Foundation, 2022, p.6

¹³ *Cornwall's Vital Signs*, p.8

For

“He raises up the needy out of affliction.”

Psalm 107:41 ESV

There is a clear mandate throughout the Bible to take action for those in need. Those in positions of power are expected to stand up for those that do not have the same privilege and cannot do so for themselves. In particular, people in the Jewish community and that of the early church who are socially outcast, the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the poor, are to be cared for. Time and time again we see a picture of a God that heals, provides and cares for those in need and we are encouraged to engage in his work of the Kingdom.

As we have addressed, there is of course a great number of people in need in Cornwall. Yet we live in a very different society to the ones at the times Biblical scriptures were written. Large amounts of income is paid to the government in tax and there is an expectation on the state to use this money to provide for those in need. In the UK there are many systems, despite their flaws, that exist exactly for this purpose: the National Health Service, the Department for Work and Pensions and state-funded schools to name a few. Some believe that this means we as the Church, no longer have a central role to care for those in need.

However, there are limitations in state provision that leave a vacuum to be filled. The state is being continually squeezed of resources due to years of economic austerity, the ongoing effects of the pandemic, conflict and unrest around the world and global economic depression. This has exacerbated need and depleted finances to be able to pay for the welfare of the state. Not only is the state starved of resources, but it also lacks personal and human approaches to issues. If the state is left to address need, even with ideal provision, economic need may be served, but many spiritual and mental aspects of the lives of those in need will be neglected. Relying on our payment of taxes to care for those in

need reduces our relationship to a distant, economic transaction, surely well short of the model that is offered to us in the person of Jesus.

Therefore, there remains a theological and practical necessity for the church to be actively involved in raising up the needy out of affliction. The Church must step up and offer stable provision in a time of insecurity. This is the great asset of the Church compared to government or other secular provision. There are no five year terms of office, no limited outcome based funding streams, but a continued, faithful presence in our communities. The majority of the churches in our diocese have been present in their communities for centuries and should continue to offer persistent, relational and localised provision to those in spiritual, mental or physical need. This is the blessing that the Church of England commits to, to be a national church in a country of need. Cornwall especially is in need of stability. In a Duchy dominated by the services industry, low education, seasonal and zero-hours employment, stretched public services and increasingly disparate communities, we must be diocese that is for those in our communities in need. We must practically provide for all the levels of need that are displayed and obediently engage in the work of God's kingdom in this.

Consequently, this practical provision must then also lead to campaigning, advocacy and seeking justice for those in need. Despite practical social action work, without a changed state, it is unfortunately very likely that the need will continue. Acting for those in need to some degree, earns a right for the church to speak up for those it serves. The Church's place in this was prominent at General Synod in July 2024 in the form of a motion from the Diocese of Sheffield. It was suggested that the Lord's Spiritual must again highlight to the new government and House of Lords' the poverty epidemic that has its grip on this country and campaign for systemic change. A motion that was passed with great enthusiasm, mostly because members felt that the social action that is going on in churches both earned the right for the church to speak but also demanded that the Church expects better of our society. The church has an opportunity, the means and hopefully the trust of those in need

to speak for and impact local and national government without any of the bureaucratic barriers that councils or funded NGOs might have. The same public responsibility that the Church of England has to care for those in need, must bring the voice of the church into the public sphere too. This voice must seek economic and social justice for those in our country in need.

The welfare state does not sufficiently care for those in need. Therefore, there is a demand placed on the church both to care for and speak for those in need. This care and voice should come hand in hand in order to ensure that the church is challenging the state to take responsibility for those areas in which it is failing to provide for those in need. Nevertheless, the welfare state cannot be used as an excuse to not be obedient to the command set out by Jesus to “Love your neighbour as yourself.”¹⁴ In order to love our neighbour though, we need to know and be with them. Therefore, we need to explore not just being for, but also, being with.

¹⁴ Luke 10:27

With

“I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

1 Corinthians 9:23 ESV

This proximity and relationship of being with is what churches can uniquely offer to those in need where state or charity support are rarely able to offer such a relationship to the same extent. Again, there is a clear direction especially in the record of both the life of Jesus and of the early Church, displayed in the New Testament of a community that embraces relationship with those in need. “Believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism” in whether we spend time with the rich or the poor, we must embrace both.¹⁵

However this directive is not shown in the makeup of the church. 60% of the UK consider themselves working class, yet 62% of the Church considers itself middle class.¹⁶ The Church of England especially can be an uncomfortable place for working class people. As the established church, it is associated with conservatism and a position of power. Inherently, this marginalises those in need, and this is exasperated when it doesn’t seek to directly abolish the privilege it possesses and remains complicit in the alienation of those the Church (and the state) oppresses. In order to change this, we as a Church need to change our culture to embrace working class people and take steps to be with those in need. It is vital to healthy Church community to display diversity. To be churches that genuinely welcome all, this will take a reprioritisation of every part of church-life, not segregated social action activities or fresh expression sub-communities. Instead we need to encourage a whole community that is unified with differences visible.

**Each person should remain
in the situation they were in
when God called them.**

1 Corinthians 7:20

¹⁵ James 2:1 NIV

¹⁶ *A Church for the Poor*, Charlesworth and Williams, 2017, p.69

Our rural context in the Diocese of Truro facilitates a ripe environment for class diversity. Individuals affected by rural poverty are generally isolated and dispersed and this means that people can live in towns and villages with huge wealth inequalities without recognising the deprivation of those around them because they don't see the starkness of the poverty first hand. Yet small, rural churches can provide a context and a space for people to make contact with extraordinary diversity. These churches are uniquely placed to be able to serve those in need in their communities with a geographical and personal reach that few other services have. Therefore, these rural churches, if they are prioritising belonging for all, hold the possibility to foster rich and diverse communities in a way that many other organisations in the UK cannot.

Remapping culture towards socio-economic inclusivity will take a costly commitment. The direct challenge should be uncomfortable to the 62% of middle class church goers. It comes with a rude awakening to the reality of the presence of a persistent marginalisation and inequality for working class people in the UK. Changing this takes time, money, creative energy and humility on the part of those in positions of power. Yet, we must grow our capacity to overcome any individualistic perspective and understand the necessity to be a church that is with those in need. This demands us to recognise our place as a guest in marginalised communities. Coming to observe and learn what is needed rather than conquer and homogenise. When we see what God seeks of us as unified Church of diverse believers, we will truly be a Church that shares the blessings of the gospel with those in need.

With and For Those in Need

“I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living”

Amos 5:24 NLT

The Church must be with and for those in need, we cannot isolate either *being with* or *acting for*. We have addressed the clear mandate for both of these habits, but if one is consistently neglected and the other prioritised, we start to see real downfalls. If we are only ever for those in need, we sustain a society that still marginalises those in need and pedestals those in power, as it doesn't recognise the inherent good in all people and encourage this to flourish. The Church will lack the community and sociality central to a gospel informed approach to social action and continue to treat those in need as 'the other', keeping them at a distance. Yet, if we are only with those in need, we will not put the privilege the church possesses to purpose. There is a capacity in the Church's voice, resources and power to seek justice, freedom and transformation for those in need and this must be used.

This combined approach of being for and with those in need is a tension that the church has to hold. We must seek a mighty flood of justice from a place of *righteous living*. What this verse from Amos is conveying is that justice

and living in a community that is right for all, come hand in hand. We cannot seek righteousness without being with. This is exactly what Jesus displayed when he descended to dwell with humanity, before he then laid down his life for us. An approach of being with and for those in need is central to the Gospel and has to be remembered in our present outworking of the Gospel here on earth.

***Tzedakah* - righteous living**

An ethical obligation to empower those in need to help themselves, helping them in developing their talents and skills in community.

Being with and for those in need will also lead to a fruitful and sustainable form of social action.¹⁷ There can be a concern that in small or overstretched churches, doing more for those in need will lead to burn out or financial difficulty and social action is often seen in an economically unsustainable light. This is another reason that relationship and being with needs to be prioritised. When we are not just serving need but developing friendships and fellowship, social action can become the point of spiritual, economic and demographic renewal for churches. As shown before, there is a large tranche of society that is not accessing church community currently, and social action can be the introduction. The introduction to both community and faith is essential because people are more than their most obvious need. We are in need of friendship, community support and spiritual wellbeing. Our levels of mental, material and spiritual need cannot be disconnected from one another. This is not to say that introducing a hungry person to Jesus will instantly solve their physical hunger, but we must truly believe that the Good News of the Kingdom is what is going to bring the change necessary to our broken society. Again, this evangelism cannot solely be for, but must come alongside community with those in need, to ensure we are not running a risk of proselytism.

When this introduction is succeeded by a community that encourages encounters with those in need and an engagement that leads to relationship, this should bring lessons and challenges to the Church's way of practice, attitudes and understanding. From this place, the church should act with imagination and experimentation to change what is necessary to be with and for those in need

The central truth to the requirement to be with and for those in need is that people are more than their direct needs. We are all complex people with areas of need and areas

¹⁷ Let me be clear, I am not saying that social action is a tool we need to use to grow our numbers in church buildings. In fact, I worry that a narrative that focuses on growth will favour the powerful and privileged further and do a disservice to those on the margins. I am simply trying to dispel the myth that social action will lead to decline.

where we can contribute across the spectrum of physical, mental, spiritual and communal capacities. All these areas need to be recognised, addressed and encouraged to enable human and societal flourishing. The vast measure of this re-visioning of our systems cannot be underestimated. In order to ensure we are not complicit to a system that marginalises those in need the hard work to bring change to our church must take place. This will require humility, enthusiastic and energetic engagement from leaders and the support of the church to be flexible and vary approaches in different contexts. Only then can we begin to be genuinely with and for those in need.

Practical Recommendations

'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.'

James 2:17 NIV

A paper by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is of no use. If the notion of being with and for those in need never gets beyond words on a page, marginalisation will continue. Therefore, a brief list has been developed of some practical suggestions for us as a church to move forwards from here. Such suggestions are cannot solve the issues discussed overnight and they cannot be applied to every context, but they are starting points to be considered that detail what being with and for those in need might look like.

1. Embracing Flexibility

As has been repeatedly stated, there is no one size fits all model to social action. We must be sensitive and obedient to our place and what God is doing in that place in order to engage with both the community and the mission of the Kingdom. For this reason, being with especially is not always predictable and measuring the outcomes of projects is not always flattering. Therefore, we must keep a flexible and open mind when considering the value of being with and for.¹⁸ This recommendation goes from every member of a church community to decision makers that gate-keep funding. We must not cling on to excessive means-testing either for those in need or the projects that are with and for. We must encourage and allow projects to try new things and be open to not seeing the forecast outcomes we initially thought would be successful.

2. Continued Exploration of Need

To be flexible we need to know whether we are bending in the right direction and therefore, we need to learn from the communities we are with and for. This happens both in daily conversations and also in more formal research work. I am glad to know that the

¹⁸ I note that this is also one of the Church Commissioners key priorities concerning the use of Lowest Income Communities Funding: Accountability, Strategic Intent and Flexibility.

Diocese of Truro is exploring this in many avenues through its work with Marjon University Cornwall on *Cornwall Rurality Matters*, Bishop Graham's work with small churches and Father Simon's work with Gypsy, Roma, traveller Communities amongst others. These reports must be accompanied by other efforts to better understand need in Cornwall, then must be applied to our policies and church-life. In practice this may include a review of ministry, safeguarding, children and young people's work, ministry, education and creation care to consider whether we are really prioritising being with and for those in need. This must continue and be accompanied by people across the diocese humbly pursuing genuine relationship with all those in need, in order to learn and grow from personal encounter.

3. Partnership Not Competition

This exploration will also show that there are many other organisations working in our communities with and for those in need. Charities, schools, faith organisations, statutory authorities and others are already carrying out an abundance of support in Cornwall. We must work with these partners, appropriately sharing resources and information. All too often, several organisations will be providing the same service, on the same day, in the same community. We as the church have a unique offer that other services do not have, but we are often not as good at providing some things that other services are excellent at. We must be happy to occupy our God-given space alongside others, not duplicating services, instead combining efforts. The Faith Covenant being pioneered by Churches Together Cornwall and Cornwall Council is a beautiful opportunity for this, but partnership must go beyond decision makers and be part of our everyday working in our towns, villages and communities.

4. Enabling by the Diocese

These first 3 recommendations of flexibility, exploration and partnership need to be welcomed by decision makers in order to allow them to flourish in our communities. There are levels of this that have been promoted in the *On the Way* process, particularly to do

with the allocation of Lowest Income Communities Funding and as noted in the introduction in the allocation of funds detailed in *Tending the Vineyard*, but we must do more. Being with and for those in need can be costly in time, energy and resources. Therefore, it needs to be adequately encouraged, enabled and supported in attitude, system and finance.

One very practical suggestion is a Community Organisation Partnership Fund. The Diocese of Truro has an abundance of buildings, often in places without any other community building. These must be open and accessible to be used by community groups, but this can be costly either to the community group or the local church. My suggestion is that the costs of renting a church building, and potentially church school buildings, for appropriate community groups should be subsidised by a diocesan fund.¹⁹ This would encourage flexibility, exploration and partnership for the local church, the community group and for those in need.

5. Genuine Transformational Relationship

Throughout the implementation of all of these recommendations we must not forget to genuinely proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. Namely that we as individuals cannot solve all the issues that lead to being in need in Cornwall, but there is a Saviour who loves us and wants to be with and for each of us, more than we ever can.

¹⁹ In Appendix C, real life examples from around the Diocese show the cost and need for this kind of fund.

Summary

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

Luke 4:18-19 NIV

Our second diocesan priority is to be good news for the most disadvantaged, this does not happen by accident. Being with and for those in need takes resources, reformation and renewal at every level. This report has shown that we must be aware of what the need is around us. We must know practically what to do for this need. We must be closely with those in need, not keeping at a social, emotional or economic distance. Finally, that we must recognise the importance of practicing the habits of being with and for those in need concurrently, obedient to what is required by the context of each place, moment and individual. We can only proclaim that we are indeed good news to the poor, when at the front of every heart and mind across our diocese, is an active passion to be with and for those in need.

Suggested Other Reading

A Call to Act, 2020, Martin Charlesworth & Natalie Williams

A Church for the Poor, 2017, Martin Charlesworth & Natalie Williams

Doing Good Better, 2017, Theos

Doing Good, 2016, Theos

For Good: The Church and the Future of Welfare, 2017, Samuel Wells, Russell Rook, David Barclay

Good Neighbours, 2014, Theos

Good News to the Poor, 2013, Tim Chester

Growing Good, 2020, Theos

Invisible Divides: Class, Culture and Barriers to Belonging in the Church, 2022, Natalie Williams and Paul Brown

Mission in Marginal Places: The Praxis, 2016, Paul Cloke & Mike Pears

Mission in Marginal Places: The Theory, 2016, Paul Cloke & Mike Pears

The Problem of Prosylytism, 2015, Theos

Volunteering After the Pandemic, 2022, Theos